

# ASHBOURNE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year ended December 31st, 1938.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Ashbourne Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report for the year 1938.

The following are the general particulars concerning the District, bearing on the Annual Report.

THE AREA of the District is 1070 acres, land and water, and the number of INHABITED HOUSES at the end of the year 1938 was 1480, an increase of 21 in the year. All of these were erected by private enterprise, the Local Authority not having completed any new houses during the year.

THE RATEABLE VALUE of the District is £28,874, and the sum produced by a penny rate is £110.

THE HOSPITALS used by the District for the reception and treatment of medical and surgical cases are the Public Assistance Institution at Stone House, Ashbourne, the Ashbourne Victoria Memorial Cottage Hospital, the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, the Children's Hospital, Derby, and the Women's Hospital, Derby. Infectious cases are dealt with at Belper Isolation Hospital, under an arrangement with your Council ; there is also accommodation for certain kinds of infectious disease at the Stone House Infirmary, Ashbourne. The Infirmary has also a shelter with two beds, in the grounds of the Institution, for the reception and treatment of advanced cases of Tuberculosis, unsuitable for ordinary Sanatorium treatment. Other cases of Tuberculosis are admitted to the County Sanatoria, in which Institutions all cases from the District spend some part of their period of treatment. The County Orthopaedic Hospital at Bretby, Burton-on-Trent, receives cases of Tuberculosis, other than those of the lungs, in addition to simple Orthopaedic cases.

CLINICS arranged by the County Medical Officer are held for minor ailments at Stone House, Ashbourne, every Saturday morning, and for Dental Cases on the first Monday of every month, and every Tuesday in addition at the same place. One of the Dental Staff attends monthly to see cases in the Public Institution. An Ante-natal Clinic is held every Saturday from 10 to 12 at the Maternity Home, Ashbourne. There are Tuberculosis Clinics twice a month, and an Ear, Throat, and Nose Clinic on the third Friday in alternate months, both at Stone House. There is an Orthopaedic Clinic at the County Offices, Derby, every Tuesday, and a Mental Clinic on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. Infant Welfare meetings held at St. John's Hall, Ashbourne, every Wednesday afternoon, with a doctor in attendance in alternate weeks, continue to work successfully.

There is no change in the main occupations of the inhabitants of the District. Messrs. R. Cooper & Co. (Ashbourne), Ltd., employ a large number of hands in the manufacture of corsets and knitted garments, and Messrs. Nestle's Milk Products, Limited, Clifton Road, Ashbourne, in the manufacture and conversion of milk into manufactured products, give employment to a large number of persons both within and outside the Factory.



## VITAL STATISTICS.

The estimated POPULATION of the District at the middle of 1938 is given by the Registrar-General as 4796, a reduction of 11 on the estimate for the previous year.

The number of BIRTHS in 1938 was 68, 40 male and 28 female. Of these one male and three females were illegitimate, the same number of illegitimate children as in 1937. The number of still-births was two, both females and both legitimate.

The total number of Births which was at its highest point in 1937, viz. :—93, has fallen much below the numbers in the previous three years. In 1936 there were 74, and in 1935, 80, so that there is no progressive improvement in the birth-rate of the District.

The BIRTH-RATE for 1938 is 14·18, as compared with 19·34 in 1937, 15·48 in 1936 and 16·87 in 1935. The lowest birth-rate in the District during recent years was 12·15 in 1932, and the highest 19·34 last year. The birth-rate for the whole country in 1938 is 15·1.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age was six, four males and two females, representing the rather high Infantile Death-Rate of 88·2 per 1,000 births. The rate for the whole country in 1938 was 53, and even in London and the great towns only 57.

The number of DEATHS in 1938 was 70, equally divided between males and females as in 1937. In that year, however, the total was only 64, and in 1936 only 49, so that there has been during the past three years a gradual increase in the number of deaths, which is doubtless to some extent explained by the larger area of the District in recent years. There was not so large a proportion of deaths of persons over 70 as in 1937, but there were 15 between 70 and 79, 12 between 80 and 89, and one over 90.

THE DEATH-RATE for the year is 14·59, the higher rate being due not only to the larger number of deaths, but also to some extent to the smaller estimate of the population of the year. In 1937 the rate was 13·31 and 1936 only 10·25. The death-rate for the whole of England and Wales in 1938 is 11·6, lower than in 1937. Heart Disease is still the commonest single cause of death, accounting for 12 cases as in 1937, but in 1938 the number of deaths from old age is also 12.

HEART DISEASE with 12 deaths had a death-rate of 2·5 as compared with 2·4 in 1937, and 1·9 in each of the two preceding years.

CANCER accounted for five deaths in 1938, three males and two females. There were four deaths in 1937, but double that number in 1936. The death-rate of Cancer in 1938 was 1·04 as compared with ·85 in 1937 and 1·69 in 1936.

RESPIRATORY DISEASES.—There were four cases of Pneumonia, compared with two in 1937, giving a death-rate of ·85, the same as in 1936, but double that in 1937. There were no cases of Bronchitis causing death in 1938; there were two in 1937.

TUBERCULOSIS accounted for three deaths as in 1937, two males and one female, representing a death-rate of ·62.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES caused four deaths in 1938, two males and one female from Diphtheria, and one female from Scarlet Fever. There were no deaths from Zymotic Disease in 1937. There was one death from Influenza in 1938, compared to four in 1937 and one in 1936.

CEREBRAL HAEMORRHAGE caused five deaths in 1938; all were females.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The chief feature of the year under review is the occurrence of an outbreak of Scarlet Fever—the most extensive for a number of years. There have been many cases also in the surrounding districts and when it is remembered that communication between such smaller places as Ashbourne and the larger towns is much easier and greater than in the past, affording greater facilities for spread from one district to another, the invasion of smaller districts from the larger ones is readily understood. Moreover, when a district has been free from a zymotic disease for many years, there are a large number of susceptible children ready to become infected. In all probability, after the end of this outbreak there will be another long period of freedom from the disease. A third





reason which appears to me to favour the spread of such a disease as Scarlet Fever at the present time is the mildness of most of the cases ; so many children with a mild attack go unnoticed and untreated, and become unwittingly sources of infection to other children and adults. I have myself discovered a certain number of these “ carriers ” of the disease. No particular part of the district and no particular classes of children have been affected ; all the schools have suffered alike, and there have been a number of cases in persons over the school age and at work. Every means have been taken to prevent the spread of the disease ; immediate isolation of affected persons (91% have been sent to the Isolation Hospital), thorough disinfection of premises, and belongings of the patient, destruction of books, pencils and other things used by the child, and daily inspection of contacts by myself and the Sanitary Inspector.

There have been more cases of Diphtheria also in the District than in previous years, but no epidemic. This disease also has been prevalent in the surrounding districts, and a few carriers have been discovered and isolated and treated. The type of disease was somewhat severe, and unfortunately three deaths occurred among the nine cases reported, so that your Council asked me to make a report on the question of immunisation against Diphtheria and this report has been under consideration by the Public Health Committee. All the cases of Diphtheria in the District occurred between the middle of July and the end of November, though a few “ carriers ” were discovered at one of the schools in December.

The following comparative table gives the number of cases of infectious disease notified in 1938 and in the two previous years :—

		1938	1937	1936
Scarlet Fever	...	45	7	6
Diphtheria	...	9	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	1	2	2
Pneumonia	...	6	6	4
Opthalmia Neonatorum	...	1	4	2
Erysipelas	...	4	0	2

The number of cases sent to hospitals for treatment were :—Scarlet Fever 41, Diphtheria 7, Puerperal Pyrexia 1, Pneumonia 3, Opthalmia Neonatorum 1, Erysipelas 1.

The District has been unusually free from non-notifiable infectious diseases during the year. The only notifications I have received from the school teachers are those of two cases of Whooping Cough. After the prevalence of Measles, Chicken Pox and other children’s complaints in the preceding years there were probably few susceptible children left to become infected.

TUBERCULOSIS.—Three cases of Tuberculosis of the Lungs were notified during the year, and one of Meningitis. One case has left the District, a second was a notification of disease found post mortem in a casual brought in dead to Stone House ; the other two cases are still in hospital.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

The supply is from the same source as in previous years, and no additions or extensions have been necessary. The yield has been constant during the period. The average daily consumption of water during the year was 115,504 gallons, that is 24·02 gallons per head per day. The Surveyor points out that owing to modern sanitary requirements, the daily consumption of water has increased by 9,961 gallons, equal to an addition of 2.0 gallons per head per day. The source of supply is, however, capable of yielding 360,000 gallons per day, and there is, therefore, ample margin for future development. The results of chemical analysis prove the water to be of satisfactory quality for drinking purposes.

The whole of the water supply is softened by the Base Exchange process which reduces the hardness from 28 to 10 parts per 100,000 gallons.

Several small extensions of water-mains have been made during the year on private housing estates, viz. :—Those of the Derby Road and Green Road respectively.



The Derby Road area is supplied by means of an automatic electrically-operated Booster Pumping Plant, situated on the site of the reservoirs in Derby Road. The Booster Plant is fed with water from the reservoirs, and supplies the district at an average pressure of 40lbs. per square inch. A constant supply is ensured, as the plant is in duplicate. It has worked very efficiently during the year, and provides for further development when required.

Windmill Lane area is also supplied by means of an automatic electrically-operated Booster Plant the water being picked up in the mains and boosted to the required pressure.

#### DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Application was made to the Ministry of Health in November, 1936, for sanction to borrow the necessary money to construct 9-inch and 6-inch sewers in the Derby Road area. The Ministry, however, informed the Council that no additional sewers should be constructed until provision had been made for the effective treatment of the sewage at the Disposal Works.

During the year the Council gave further consideration to the question of improving and enlarging the Sewage Disposal Works, and application was made to the Ministry of Health in September, 1938, for sanction to borrow £16,000 to carry out the proposed extensions to the existing Sewage Disposal Works.

It is anticipated that the Ministry will hold an inquiry early in 1939.

#### RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The Henmore Brook, which passes east to west through the centre of the District, has been kept free from pollution and has been regularly inspected during the year.

#### CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Only houses in the outer parts of the District, which is rural in character, are not connected to the sewers. But when the Ministry of Health gives its sanction to the borrowing of the necessary money, sewers will be laid in these areas, and about 40 houses will be converted to the water-carriage system.

#### PUBLIC CLEANSING.

House Refuse is collected weekly from all premises by a seven cubic yard Chelsea Type Freighter Dust Cart, and disposed of at a two-cell Refuse Destructor. Approximately 1,300 tons are incinerated annually. Tins are stored from the refuse and pressed and then sold to scrap dealers. At the present time they find a ready market.

#### SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

The Sanitary Inspector's Tabular Statement is appended to this report and the following summary gives the results of :

##### (1). INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR :

1.	(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	...	110
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	...	...	220
2.	(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925					40
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	...	...	90
3.		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	17
4.		Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation					28

##### (2). REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING THE YEAR WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	...	...	12
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(3). ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR :

(a)	Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936					
(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	...	40
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notice	...	...	...	...	40
(a)	By Owners	...	...	...	...	40
(b)	By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	...	Nil
(b)	Proceedings under Public Health Acts					
(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	...	20
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices	...	...	...	...	20
(a)	By Owners	...	...	...	...	20
(b)	By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	...	Nil
(c)	Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936					
(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made					4
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders					Nil
(d)	Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936					
(1)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	...	...	Nil
(2)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	...	...	...	...	Nil

(4). HOUSING ACT, 1936, PART IV. OVERCROWDING :

(a)	(1)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	...	9
	(2)	Number of families dwelling therein	...	9
	(3)	Number of persons dwelling therein	...	58
(b)		Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	...	Nil
(c)	(1)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	...	2
	(2)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	...	17
(d)		Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	...	Nil
(e)		Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report	...	Nil

SWIMMING BATH.

There is one privately-owned Swimming Bath (open air) in the District, and it is open to the public. It is equipped with filtration plant for changing the water every eight hours, and the water has been kept in a satisfactory condition.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

A British Red Cross Society Motor Ambulance is garaged and maintained by the Council for the use of non-infectious cases. It covers a radius of ten miles from Ashbourne, at a charge of 9d. per mile.

By agreement with the Belper Isolation Hospital, infectious cases are collected from the Urban District at a charge of 1/- per mile for the use of the ambulance.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ERNEST A. SADLER,

April 10th, 1939.

Medical Officer of Health.

